

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the claims of the present application are respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge, with thanks, the Examiner's indication that Claims 13 and 26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In light of this statement and to expedite prosecution of the present application, applicants have rewritten Claims 13 and 26 in independent form including limitations for any intervening claim. As such, independent Claims 13 and 26 are allowable over the art applied in the present Office Action.

The amendments to Claims 13 and 26 necessitated the cancellation of Claims 1, 8 and 15. Applicants have also made amendments to Claims 2, 4, 7, 9, 10 and 12 wherein the dependency of those claims have been changed from cancelled Claim 1 to Claim 13. Likewise, applicants have changed the dependencies of Claims 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25 and 28 from Claim 15 to Claim 26.

Applicants observe that the above amendments to the claims make the following rejections moot:

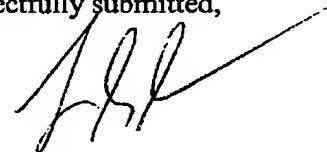
1. Claims 1, 2, 4, 7-10, 14-17, 19-22, 24, 27 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Lewis et al. (U.S. 2002/0139975 A1).
2. Claims 11 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Lewis et al.
3. Claims 12 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Lewis et al. in view of Gardner et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,160,300).

4. Claims 3, 5, 6 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Lewis et al. in view of Kawasaki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,605,860).

As such, applicants provide no further comments for distinguishing the amended claims from the applied references cited in the present Office Action since the rejections have been obviated by way of amending the claims to include subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is firmly believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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